

LEGISLATIVE ACTION IN THE  
SENATE

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, a funny thing happened before the Memorial Day recess. We finally did something around here. I say "a funny thing" because we haven't done that much to write home about. What happened was we had the juvenile justice bill come before this body. It was debated. Amendments were offered. Votes were taken. The Senate passed the bill by a large bipartisan majority.

I think that is the way we ought to be doing our business rather than having a bill brought up and having the so-called amendment tree filled to prevent those of us on this side of the aisle from bringing up amendments. I think the way the juvenile justice bill was handled was good. I hope we see more of that openness on the floor of the Senate.

When we had the juvenile justice bill before us, we did some good things. One of the good things we did was to pass some commonsense gun laws.

Now, after a 2-week break, the House is going to be taking up the juvenile justice bill and looking at these gun laws and deciding on which of them they are going to move forward. From the reports I read in the paper today—I haven't read the House bill yet, although we are going over it now—those gun laws are significantly weakened.

I say to my friends in the House, where I proudly served for 10 years, if anything, you should strengthen those laws, not weaken those laws. We had the Lautenberg amendment that passed. As I understand it, it has been weakened over on the House side, opening up new loopholes so that people at gun shows can call themselves exhibitors and not have to pay attention to all the important background checks that should take place before a gun is purchased at a gun show. So we will be watching.

As the people were very happy to see us do sensible gun laws, they also are waiting for us to do something else. That has to do with their health care. That has to do with the Patients' Bill of Rights. That has to do with the fact that many HMOs are not treating patients in the right fashion.

I know we are taking up the Y2K bill to protect businesses from lawsuits. It is an important bill. I am glad we are taking it up. I have my opinions on it. I will be offering an amendment on it. I hope I can support it.

But what about the vast majority of Americans who need us to pass a Patients' Bill of Rights? Somehow this keeps going to the back of the list. More and more Americans need us to look at their problems: Women who can't get access to their OB/GYNs or, if they do, it is very restrictive; people who get taken to an emergency room far away from the closest one and are told that this really wasn't an emergency, because, guess why, they didn't die, so then their HMO doesn't cover the visit; a child needs to see a spe-

cialist and can't see one or has a chronic condition and must always see a specialist and go through bureaucratic hoops to see that specialist.

I thought we honored our children. That is not the way to treat a sick child. We should be making the lives of our children easier, not harder, especially when they are very sick.

Worst of all, HMOs cannot be held accountable in court. You cannot sue your HMO, even if the HMO made a medical decision that resulted in a patient's death or put someone in a coma permanently.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The 5 minutes of the Senator from California have expired.

Mrs. BOXER. I ask unanimous consent to complete in 1 minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, the practices of too many HMOs are outrageous. It is equally outrageous that we haven't had a chance to bring that bill to the floor for debate. We on this side of the aisle spent all last year pleading to bring it up, but we were met with delay and obstruction, just as we did on the minimum wage.

We fought hard to finally get a minimum wage bill brought up a couple of Congresses ago. We are going to fight hard again to get a new minimum wage bill brought up, to get a Patients' Bill of Rights brought up. We are not going to stop until it happens. We want to make this Senate relevant to the lives of our people, just as we did when we took up the juvenile justice bill. I look forward to working with Members on both sides of the aisle on a Patients' Bill of Rights, raising the minimum wage, and other issues we need to take up.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

## ORDER OF PROCEDURE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from North Dakota is recognized for 15 minutes.

Mr. McCONNELL. Will the Senator yield?

Mrs. BOXER. Yes.

Mr. McCONNELL. Does the Senator from North Dakota control the time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California would have 5 additional minutes after the Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I am just trying to get in line here.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, can I say to my friend that Senator DURBIN had taken 30 minutes in this part of the morning business hour. He has designated me to control that 30 minutes. As I understand it, I took 6 minutes. We now have 15 minutes for Senator DORGAN and the remaining time by Senator TORRICELLI. That would complete this side's time. We have no problem with the Senator getting his time.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I am confused as to what I am inquiring

about. The time is controlled by Senator DURBIN until when?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Twenty-three and a half minutes remain under the control of the Senator from California.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized at the end of the time controlled by Senator DURBIN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Nicolas Benjamin be granted floor privileges.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. DORGAN and Mr. WELLSTONE are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent Senator REED be recognized for 10 minutes and I be recognized for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from New Jersey is recognized for 10 minutes.

## GUN CONTROL

Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, last month for the first time in a generation, the Senate voted for some reasonable additions to the national gun control legislation.

We principally did three things of value to our country: We voted to ban the possession of assault weapons by minors; we voted to require background checks on the purchase of firearms at the 4,000 gun shows held nationally in our country; and to require that firearms come equipped with a child safety lock.

They were hard-won victories. Each in their own right was an important statement about our commitment to the safety of our citizens. Each represents America coming to terms with the level of gun violence in America. But it is important that they be held in some perspective, because none was particularly bold. While they make a contribution to dealing with the problem, they do not begin to end the problem.

Now the House of Representatives has another chance to build on the work of the Senate and respond to the needs of the American people, the desperate need to have some reasonable